

DETECTIVE STORIES.

Little Things as Aids In Solving Problems In Crime.

THE VALUE OF SMALL CLEWS

"In All My Experience," Says Police Sergeant Cuff, One of Wilkie Collins' Creations, "I Have Never Yet Met Such a Thing as a Trifle."

If you ask some London publishers they will tell you that no book sells so well as a detective story and that people still find a fascination in the achievements of Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin, Gaboriau's Lecoq and Tabaret and the redoubtable Sergeant Cuff of Wilkie Collins.

These men were the forerunners of Sherlock Holmes, and their feats of criminal tracking were as remarkable as those achieved by the famous character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Perhaps the least known is Cuff, who figures in "The Moonstone." Cuff looked for clues in trifles. Investigating a smear on a newly painted door, he was told by the superintendent who had the case in hand that it was made by the petticoats of the women servants. The superintendent said petticoats were trifles.

"In all my experience along the dirtiest ways of this dirty little world," replied Cuff, "I have never met such a thing as a trifle yet. We must see the petticoat that made the smear, and we must know for certain that the paint was wet."

Lecoq, the bean ideal of the French detective, was wont to explain his deductions to assistants, just as Sherlock Holmes did to his friend Watson. In the story of "File No. 113" a safe has been robbed. There is a scratch on the door of the safe which seems to have been made by the key slipping from the lock. But Lecoq explained that the paint was hard and that the scratch could not have been made by the trembling hand of the thief letting the key slip.

He therefore had an iron box made, painted with green varnish, like the safe. As Lecoq inserted the key he asked the assistant to endeavor to prevent him using the key just as he was about to insert it in the lock. The assistant did so, and the key held by Lecoq, pulled aside from the lock, slipped along the door and traced upon it a diagonal scratch from top to bottom, the exact reproduction of the one shown in a photograph of the safe. Thus it was proved that two persons were present at the robbery—one wished to take the money and the other to prevent its being taken.

In the play Sherlock Holmes, the detective, with the aid of an accomplice, raises an alarm of fire at the house of the Larrabees, during the excitement of which he is able to investigate the mystery of the purloined documents.

A somewhat similar incident occurs in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter," when Dupin, having obtained entrance to the house of a minister of the state who had purloined a letter of great importance from a lady, wished to take it from its hiding place—a card rack over the mantelpiece—and substitute a facsimile. While Dupin was talking to the minister there was a sudden report of a pistol beneath the window, followed by fearful screams and loud shouting. The minister rushed to the window, and while his attention was thus distracted Dupin took the real letter and substituted the false one which he had prepared. Needless to say, the diversion had been created by Dupin's assistants.

Although "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" somewhat overshadow the stories of other detectives which appeared in the Strand Magazine, one should not forget to mention Martin Hewitt, investigator, and Dick Donovan.

Both these detectives worked alone and were past masters in the art of solving robbery mysteries, murders and the crimes of secret societies.

And the value of noting trifles, particularly in detective work, is strikingly illustrated in "The Case of Mr. Foggart." The latter had been murdered in his chamber, which was situated at the top of the building in which Hewitt had an office. Hewitt was the first one on the scene. The door was locked, and when he got inside the room he found Foggart lying across the table, shot dead. There was a sheer drop of fifty feet outside the windows. How had the murderer got in, and how had he escaped?

On the sideboard were the freshly bitten remains of an apple. Hewitt noticed that it had been bitten by a person who had lost two teeth, one at the top and one below. He also saw that the dead man had an excellent set of false teeth, with none missing. He observed, too, that an active young man could, by standing on the window sill, draw himself on the roof and thus escape. Thus Hewitt comes to look for a tall, athletic looking young man with two teeth missing. He finds him, obtains by a ruse another apple which he has bitten, compares the two and ultimately obtains the startling story of the murder from the murderer himself after the coroner's jury had returned a verdict of "accidental death."—London Tit-Bits.

It is the little pleasures which make life sweet, as the little displeasures may do more than afflictions can to make it bitter.

Confide a secret to a dumb man and it will make him speak.—LIVONIAN.

SAYINGS

OF MRS. SOLOMON—CONFESSIONS OF THE SEVEN HUNDREDTH WIFE.

Translated by Helen Rowland.

Consider matrimony, oh, my daughter, for it is one long sweet song. Yes, it is a music box having only one tune, which it playeth today, yesterday and forever. It is as unchanging as the spaghetti of the Italian table d'hôte.

Behold how a married woman ariseth in the morning at the sounding of the alarm clock. She findeth her husband's clean socks; she layeth out his bath towels.

She dusteth the piano and watereth the rubber plant. She goeth into the kitchen and consulteth with the cook; she receiveth the butcher, and the baker, and the milkman.

She tracketh lost articles unto their lair; she sendeth her lord's suit unto the tailor's, and gathereth up the laundry.

She feedeth the cat.

She goeth forth and returneth at exactly half-past five that she may curl her pompadour to cheer the eyes of her lord.

She putteth on a fresh dress—yet he seeth it not.

She telleth him a new joke and he answereth, "Hum!"

She kisseth him on the forehead and he brusheth her away as a fly that hath alighted upon him. She goeth to bed at half-past nine.

And this she doeth for 365 days in the year.

Then I say unto thee condemn not any wife because she picketh a quarrel for excitement. Lo! a family row is the great marital amusement. And why shall ye interfere in the pastimes of man and wife?

For a row is a diversion and a rousing argument letteth off steam and produceth exhilaration. It is a pleasant change.

And if they can find naught else to disagree about, a happily mated couple can quarrel for hours over whether it is worse to put the mucilage brush in the ink or the pen in the mucilage.

For before marriage a husband is a stimulant, but after marriage he becomes a sedative.

Verily, verily, stale cheese is an abomination, and stale beer is flat; but what is so stale as a stale husband? Selah!

AN INTERNATIONAL INSULT.

Now comes the aeroplane hat. We might have known it. In fact, the greatest wonder about it is that it has taken such a long time in starting. It is on its way to New York from Paris—that den of decorative iniquity—to attend a Gotham hat show. Its fell purpose is to take a prize if possible, and if not, to start a millinery rough-house.

The new creation is a pretty little thing. It has huge feathers amidships to represent wings. Fore and aft from the head projects the car. The meager reports we have up to date do not mention the gasoline engine, the propellers, the passengers, the noise, and the smell, but we feel sure they are symbolically there.

There is no doubt about it that the aeroplane bonnet is an actual fact, and that it has not only been designed, but constructed, assembled, and shipped. The only question remaining to be settled is: Will American women be able to dig up enough nerve to wear it? That is what the Parisian inventor wants to know, from a standpoint of idle curiosity, tainted a bit with commercialism. The idea seems to be that if the new hats do well in America, they are sure to do well in France.

Right here is where we wish to have words with whoever it is that doubts the bravery of American women. If any pink-whiskered Frenchman thinks our better halves are underweight when it comes to courage up aloft, we are talking to him; and if he will name the time and the place, we will take him out and thrash him with one of his own plumes, and then stick a feather down his back to make him think his ribs are broken.

Why, the women of this land dug

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stumps out of the cornfield while their husbands were being scalped by wild Indians. About the same time the women of France were fretting over some kiss-my-lady-la-pop-in-jay controversy about the location of Venus de Milo's other pinion. We have them beaten all along the line, and we resent the insinuation that we can't wear just as obstreperous bonnets as anybody else.

Let the Parisian designers keep their hats to themselves, unless they are willing to send them over with the understanding that our women are just as liable to crawl under them and be contented as the women of France, or any other semi-civilized country.

NO CHINAMAN CONVERTED.

Referring to the recent murder of Elsie Siegel in New York by a Chinaman she was trying to convert, one is tempted to ask whether the business of missions among the Chinese is worth while, since the history of the movement shows that the Chinaman is more likely to convert the mission worker to opium than the mission worker is to convert the Chinaman to Christianity.

Sir Robert Hart, for many years in charge of the Chinese customs, on behalf of the British Government, and probably better acquainted with China and Chinese than any other white man, has made the frank statement that, no matter what missionaries may believe and say, not one Chinaman has ever been really converted to Christianity.

He contends that the sole object of attending English-speaking schools is to learn English and to pick up foreign methods, and that John Chinaman's pretense of conversion is pretense and nothing more.

There are more white heathen in New York than all the Chinamen mission will ever convert, here or in China. And such girls as Elsie Siegel can find better employment for their energies among the children of the American poor than among the almond-eyed devils of the Chinese hells, infested by the very worst of the underworld.

Women are not having a real good time unless three or four of them are talking at once.

The women always say that if the men had to be mothers there would not be so many children.

STOPPING THE PAPER.

Some time ago, a cranky sort of individual came in the office and stopped his paper because something in it did not just exactly suit his fancy.

We have frequently met him on the street since then, and it is amusing to note the look of surprise on the old fellow's face when he realizes that the editor is still in existence, regardless of the fact that we are no longer getting his \$1.00.

Some day, however—and it will not be long—that old gentleman will turn up his toes. His heart will be stilled forever. There will be a display of pretty posies and crepe and the neighbors and friends will follow his lifeless clay out to the Silent City and lay it to rest in the deep, dark tomb.

An obituary will be published in this paper, telling what a kind husband, loving father, good neighbor, beloved citizen, and how progressive and public-spirited he was—which the recording angel will overlook for sweet charity's sake—and in a short time he will be forgotten.

As he lies out there in the cold, cold graveyard, wrapped in the silent slumber of death, he will never know the last kind word spoken of him will be by the editor of the paper which he so spitefully "stopped."

CAPSULES.

A New York burglar says there is no money in burglary. Let us hope that neither the new tariff nor the Taft administration will bring prosperity to that line of endeavor—Chicago News.

The latest photograph of Mr. Taft shows him with a smile that strongly indicates he likes the job so well he will be a candidate for re-election.

Uncle Henry Gassaway Davis's imported family tree will have to pay duty under the new tariff on lumber.—Chicago Tribune.

Tom Watson thinks the United States should be divided into four nations, Rhode Island and—what are the other three?—Cleveland Leader.

Blanks for the returns required by the corporation tax law are being prepared for early distribution. Comment on the law is frequently punctured with blankety-blank blanks.—Providence Journal.

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